

The Builder.

NUMBER 152.

VOLUME IV.

SATURDAY, JAN. 3.

THE OPENING OF A NEW VOLUME.

IN our brief address at the close of last year (a short week ago,—so quickly does the present become the past) we claimed our readers' belief for any promises we might make for the future, on the ground that we had redeemed all former pledges to their satisfaction,—an assumption somewhat egotistical it must be confessed, but which we have been led implicitly to believe and confidently to assert, chiefly by their own kind and increasing encouragement. We pointed out what had been done, and alluded to some few particulars which, of themselves, rendered the volume indispensably necessary as well to all owners and occupiers of houses, as to the architect, surveyor, builder, and decorative artist. To this therefore, we shall not now refer; our present business is with the future, and to offer an assurance to our readers, that no efforts shall be spared to increase the usefulness and value of the journal, and to render it equal to the great objects it has in view, and worthy of the confidence reposed in it by the public.

We begin the year under very promising circumstances,—our arrangements are more complete than they have ever yet been, and our contributors more numerous and able. We circulate among classes who, for some time after the establishment of *THE BUILDER* were led by want of full appreciation of the scope of the title, to look no further; and our field of action is extended and extending.

Our means of obtaining information are considerable, and our readers, if they could be induced to take the trouble, might make them perfect and universal. If each of our well wishers throughout the kingdom, would inform us briefly of simple facts, and occurrences connected with the subjects of which we treat,—a novelty in construction; a failure and why; injury to ancient structures, the erection of new; proposed competitions; trials at law relating to buildings; intended improvements, and similar topics,—the result would be a body of information of the most valuable and interesting character. This assistance therefore, we solicit from them, and we further, ask architects to give us early information of the buildings they may have in hand, and publishers to send us notices of the works they issue, though we cannot promise praise, we do propose to give both buildings and books, unprejudiced and unbiased consideration, and to commend where commendation is in any degree deserved.

We deal in honesty rather than disguise; we are not disposed to wound feelings merely to

appear smart, and to depress struggling merit for the sake of shewing our own taste, or superior knowledge of the subject treated. When, however, the interests of the public demand plain speaking, when corruption is apparent, dishonourable conduct exhibited, when public officers are inefficient or unjust, or a charlatan deserves exposure, we will not be deterred from what we may believe to be our duty, by consideration for individuals or by any personal fears. And though we may not use our arms every week, we promise those who force us to resort to them, a none the less determined and vigorous opponent.

One great object that we have in view is, to render the art and science of architecture familiar to the general reader; to diffuse a knowledge of the subject, and to raise the standard of taste. With a view to this, we shall strive to interest and please as well as instruct. Painting and sculpture, as important accessories of architecture, will have our care; and archaeology, and general science to a certain extent, will fall within our province. To the proposed revision of the Metropolitan Buildings Act, we shall of course give attention, and shall continue to place before our readers all the more important awards of the official referees, which shew its operation, and may serve as precedents.

Among the subjects to which we shall continue to refer, with the hope of effecting improvements are, defective modes of construction; ventilation; drainage, and the administration of competitions; and we shall ever urge the improvement of our operatives, the removal of the window-tax (a tax on cleanliness, health, and architectural propriety), the admission of the people to public monuments, and the establishment and maintenance of a NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ARCHITECTURE.

In consequence of the length of some important papers in our present number, it does not contain the same amount of "news" as usual. Information from the provinces and abroad, railway jottings, and notes on passing events are unavoidably postponed. We mention this that our readers may not suppose less attention will be paid in this respect than heretofore. The reverse will be the case.

BURSTING OF A TANK AT LIVERPOOL.—The late fatal accident at Liverpool calls for a searching examination, with the view of lessening the probability of its recurrence elsewhere. We shall next week discuss the subject, which is of great importance, as some length, and point out the circumstances to be attended to in providing receptacles for fluids.

THE OLD 'CHANGES OF LONDON: AND REMARKS ON THE RELICS FOUND ON THEIR SITE.

BY W. TITE, ESQ., F.R.S.

At the last meeting of the Institute of Architects, Mr. W. Tite, V.P., read a paper illustrative of several of the proceedings connected with the two old Exchanges, as derived from the records of the Corporation of London, and of the Mercers' Company; with notices of the antiquities discovered on the site of the former edifices. The title of this discourse naturally indicated its division into three general sections:—some illustrations concerning the first Exchange of Sir Thomas Gresham; some particulars relating to that built after the great fire, and recently destroyed; and some account of the ancient remains found on the site of the old buildings, in making the excavations for the present structure. Mr. Tite exhibited several drawings and plans of the old Exchanges; as well as a large and interesting selection of those antiquities, which were displayed in several glass-cases on the table.

The materials of the first two portions of the discourse having been derived chiefly, from that exceedingly curious and valuable series of "Extracts from the Records of the City of London, and the Books of the Joint-Committee upon Gresham Affairs," printed by the Corporation, Mr. Tite commenced by observing, that British records were the only sure foundations for British history. He then adverted to the high reputation of the national records of this country, as excelling "in age, beauty, correctness, and authority, whatever the choicest archives abroad can produce of the like sort," in the words of the eulogy of Sir Joseph Ayloffe; and then passed on to the peculiar characteristics of the "Records of the Chamber of London," noticing the "Liber Albus," the "Liber Horne," and their printed representative, "Arnold's Chronicle;" ending with a description and recital of the first charter granted to the City of London by William I.

The historical notices concerning the erection of the Bourse of Sir Thomas Gresham, as well as of the second Exchange, independently of the official entries now brought forward, are exceedingly indefinite and imperfect; and those extracts formed, perhaps, the most valuable part of the whole discourse. In our account of these portions, therefore, we shall be the most minute; but it is quite impossible to present even a summary of them all in the present limits: more especially, as Mr. Tite stated, that he had marked for reading many more extracts of great curiosity, which the time compelled him to omit.

It is commonly known as the origin of the first Exchange, that "Forasmuch as the meetings of the merchants of London were unpleasant and troublesome, by reason of their walking and talking in a narrow street," in all weathers, Sir Thomas Gresham made to the Corporation his famous offer of erecting a Bourse at his own especial charge. Hence Mr. Tite's first extract from the proceedings of the Court of Aldermen, Jan. 4th, 1564 (1565), stated, that "After the gentle and very friendly offer made unto the Courte here this daye, for the erectyng and buyldyng at his onely costs and charges of a comely bourse for merchants to asseamble upon, so that the Cytye, at their charges, wylf provyde and appoynt a mete and apte place for the same, beinge well and rypely